



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

Thum Prints

*A Sydney Symphony Orchestra
Family Concert*

2018



SUN 16 SEP, 2PM



Principal Partner



**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

FAMILY CONCERTS

SUNDAY 16 SEPTEMBER, 2PM

.....
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

Thum Prints

Gordon Hamilton *conductor*

Tom Thum *beatboxer*

Gordon Hamilton (born 1982)

482 Variations on a Very Short Theme

.....
The concert will be performed without
interval and will conclude at
approximately 3pm.

.....
COVER PHOTO: Conan Whitehouse

Opposites

Hamilton and Tom Thum

***Thum Prints: A Concerto Contradiction for beatboxer
and orchestra***

Prelude

Suspendophobic

Beat Mosaic

Sound Exchange

Junk Mosaic

The Sorcerer

Tchaikovsky: 'Trepak'

Colours of my Palate

Landscape Painting

Minor Offence

Thum Thing

Ratchet Face

**Join us in the Northern Foyer after the concert for our
musical Activity Zone for kids!**



Principal Partner

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Gordon Hamilton (born 1982) 482 Variations on a Very Short Theme

PAT O'NEIL



Just three notes from a Beatles recording provided the inspiration for Gordon Hamilton's *482 Variations on a Very Short Theme*. The three-note theme on the lyrics 'in a yellow' is

sped up, slowed down, moved up and down throughout the endless combinations of instruments, turned backwards and upside down, extended out into longer melodies, and, in the middle episode, used as the basis for an aching beautiful chorale featuring solo strings and harp.

The strings use many extended techniques, including 'snap' pizzicato, playing with the wooden back of the bow, and playing harmonic overtones in glissandos (slides).

A surprise Mexican dance emerges in the trumpet and percussion in tribute to the work's first conductor and dedicatee, Alondra de la Parra, before the music moves towards a fanfare ending, constructed from segments of the original tune.

Opposites

Gordon Hamilton has composed *Opposites* especially for this Sydney Symphony Orchestra Family Concert. This fun piece takes us around the orchestra exploring the different sounds and how they are made. It challenges us to listen carefully, and perhaps we can mimic the sound with our voices and bodies - a bit like a beat boxer.

Opposites is a short piece where lots of opposite things happen:

high and low (pitch);
loud and soft (dynamics);
fast and slow (tempo);
detached and smooth (articulation);
solo and everyone (instrumentation);
forwards and backwards (time);
bright and dark (colour);
divisive and additive (rhythm);
consonant and dissonant (harmony).

Gordon Hamilton and Tom Thum *Thum Prints – A Concerto* Contradiction for beatboxer and orchestra

(2015, rev. 2016, 2017, 2018 and probably 2019 too)

Prelude
Suspendophobic
Beat Mosaic
Sound Exchange
Junk Mosaic
The Sorcerer
Tchaikovsky: 'Trepak'
Colours of my Palate
Landscape Painting
Minor Offence
Thum Thing
Ratchet Face

Gordon Hamilton writes...

The work is *Thum Prints* and the beatboxer is Tom Thum, a magnificently talented dude with an inexhaustible vocal inventory of glorious and weird noises. His beats are astonishingly complex. In one of our first sessions, I spent several hours trying to decode a few bars of 4/4 drum and bass that Tom had recorded for me; slowing it down digitally just revealed yet more layers of intricacy.

Beatboxers, unlike singers, are not limited to a single musical line. They can use their larynx, lips and tongue independently. Tom has shown how this is possible with an endoscope (it's very gross). Tom's grooves often are made of polyphonic layers of pitched and un-pitched noise that you would imagine are emerging from two or three different drum machines.

If Tom already has an 'orchestra inside his mouth', why add a real-life orchestra? Successful concertos combine two (or more) sound forces that are already 'complete' in their own ways. Pianos, cellos, violins (and beatboxers) all can make a full musical offering on their own. The use of the orchestra is not just to accompany, but to set up an equal force in conversation with the soloist.

In real life, Tom is like a hyperactive drum kit (that can play itself) – constant outbursts of noise! Initially I wrote a short movement inspired by the constant flow of sonic goop: *Junk Mosaic*. It's built upon an atonal tone row; Tom's fresh sound-palette gives us license to use dissonance. I was shocked and delighted at the premiere with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra: the audience (of mostly Tom's fans) applauded at the special effects *during the music*, apparently not objecting to its atonality.

Thum Prints was conceived like an album – a collection of short pieces that fit together. For some pieces, Tom brought me an idea around which I've wrapped orchestral music. *Ratchet Face* is one of these: it began as a jaw-dropping display of beatboxing with loop pedals and Kaoss Pads; in some spots I asked Tom to pull back, to allow the orchestra to 'flex'.

In other pieces, I composed for sampled drum kit and orchestra, then asked Tom to develop and improve the ideas.

Other parts were composed in direct collaboration. In one case, for example, Tom found a few chords on an (out-of-tune) piano; he recorded me improvising on these chords, and then aggressively edited my improvisation, reconstructing it into a song with beatboxing and lyrics about his dodgy neighbour. I then adapted it for orchestra, adding extra material and embellishing the harmony.

Tom and I both delight in smooshing together his unholy mouth with grotesque, rhythmic and lush orchestral effects. This is music that neither of us could have written on our own!

GORDON HAMILTON © 2018

Originally, Thum Prints was cast in 11 movements, for a 16-piece chamber orchestra, and premiered in QSOCurrent. Tom and Gordon were invited to make a full orchestral version for the Brisbane Festival and BBC Proms Australia in 2016. This is its first performance with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.



JAMES AMBROSE

SSO Young Ambassadors 2018

This year our Young Ambassadors are:

Hamish	Lachlan Massey
Sarah Bradley	Bettina Minogue
Liam Brewin Higgins	Emma Warburton
Alexander Maltas	

Learn more about the program at www.sydneyphilharmonic.com/young-ambassadors

Composing Wall

Meet composers Bree Van Ryk and Georgia Scott and make your own groovy tune.

Exotic Instruments

Be the instrument as you learn some cool body-percussion riffs with Wil New.

Mobile Orchestra

Sample your voice and loop it like Tom Thum with Chris Costaganna.

Percussion Club

Learn to rap your name and play the beats with Emily McKnight.

F A M I L Y C O N C E R T S

Southern Foyer

Capture your selfies at the SSO selfie wall with guest appearances by Tom Thum, Gordon Hamilton and some musicians.

A young woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a black off-the-shoulder dress, is the central focus. She is holding a violin and looking slightly to her right with a thoughtful expression. In the background, several other people in formal attire, including men in tuxedos and a woman in a black dress, are visible, suggesting a concert or gala event.

Choose Music.

2019

A year of
spectacular events.

Join us.

2019... An incredible season ahead

Every concert night, when the musicians of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra pick up their instruments, they take musical notations that are fixed on a page and breathe extraordinary life into them. It is their artistry that miraculously brings the score alive.

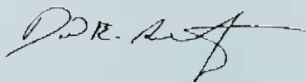
The music we share with you in the Concert Hall tonight is the artistic realisation of pen and ink, ideas on paper – it may be a bit different to how it was in rehearsal, or how it sounds on other nights. That's one of the gifts of live music-making – the shared energy, here and now, makes each performance special.

It's exactly what we strive to achieve each time we present a new season to you – a season that is special, that anticipates the enthusiasm you bring as a music lover, that stimulates your curiosity and inspires you to enjoy more music with us.

The 2019 season is wonderfully diverse. The Season Opening Gala places Diana Doherty – a musical treasure – centre stage with Nigel Westlake's *Spirit of the Wild* oboe concerto, reprising one of the most exciting premieres of my time in Sydney. The operas-in-concert continue with Britten's *Peter Grimes*, headlined by a powerhouse duo – Stuart Skelton and Nicole Car. And, in a first for Australia, an amazing piece of theatre-with-music: Tom Stoppard and André Previn's satirical *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*.

My final program in 2019 – American Harmonies – brings together all-American showstoppers: the lyrical beauty of Copland's *Appalachian Spring*; a new concerto by Christopher Rouse that showcases the incredible talent of one of our own musicians, bassoonist Todd Gibson-Cornish; and *Harmonielehre* by John Adams – one of the greats and a very dear personal friend. That spirit of warm friendship between you, me and the musicians is so important to our musical community.

Please join us in 2019 and let's celebrate together.



David Robertson

The Lowy Chair of
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

Highlights – David Robertson Conducts

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| FEBRUARY | Season Opening Gala – Diana Doherty performs Westlake
The Sydney Symphony Orchestra
and Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra |
| JUNE | Lang Lang Gala Performance – Mozart Piano Concerto No.24 |
| JULY | Britten's <i>Peter Grimes</i>
with Stuart Skelton and Nicole Car |
| AUGUST | Keys to the City Festival
Kirill Gerstein – piano concertos by Grieg, Ravel and Gershwin |
| NOVEMBER | André Previn and Tom Stoppard's <i>Every Good Boy Deserves Favour</i> – A play for actors and orchestra
with Mitchell Butel and Martin Crewes

American Harmonies – Adams, Copland and Rouse |





Illustration by Leslie Greener

The Happiness Box

A Sydney Symphony Orchestra Family Concert

The Happiness Box is the inspiring story of three friends – a lizard, a monkey and a frog – who find a magical box and embark on a journey through the jungle to discover the secret of happiness.

Australian film and TV composer Bryony Marks has captured the wonder of the friends' adventure in a musical celebration of humour, courage and friendship.

For kids 5–12 and their families.

MARKS The Happiness Box
Based on the book by
David Griffin and illustrated
by Leslie Greener

Iain Grandage conductor
Amanda Bishop narrator

Sunday 4 November, 2pm
Sydney Opera House

*Free Kids Activity Zone
in the Opera House Northern
Foyer an hour before
and after the performance.*

THE ARTISTS



PAT O'NEIL

Gordon Hamilton *composer, conductor*

- Gordon loves etymology. The word “music” comes from Ancient Greek *mousa*, meaning ‘the muse’. That Greek word in turn comes from Proto-Indo-European root (way before Greek!) **men-*, meaning ‘think’. That original root has found its way separately into English in the word ‘mind’.
- Gordon has a tattoo.
- Gordon cannot beatbox, despite having a famous beatboxer for a teacher.

Gordon Hamilton’s compositions subvert expectations of the orchestra. His 2014 work *‘Ghosts in the Orchestra’* places a choir among the orchestral players, prompting them with sung instructions, while *Action Hero* (2016) pairs the recorded voice of Arnold Schwarzenegger with orchestra. He has arranged and conducted several crossover projects, including with Hip-hop duo Horrorshow and Cuban pianist Marialy Pacheco. In 2018 he collaborated with rapper-poet Luka Lesson on *Macquarie*, an orchestral–hiphop interrogation of the legacy of NSW Governor Lachlan Macquarie.

In 2018–19, Gordon will conduct Germany’s Funkhausorchester and Nürnberger Symphoniker, the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

After freelancing for five years in Germany, Gordon took over in 2009 as Artistic Director of The Australian Voices (TAV). Gordon’s choral opera *MOON* (2011) toured with TAV to Australia, Germany and to the Edinburgh Fringe. In 2014 TAV made international headlines with their video of Rob Davidson’s *‘Not Now, Not Ever!’* – a musical work based on former Prime Minister Julia Gillard’s famous ‘misogyny’ speech.



CONAN WHITEHOUSE

Tom Thum *beatboxer*

- Tom Loves finding the quietest place he can to be as noisy as possible.
- Tom Has an intimate knowledge of Australian invertebrates.
- Tom Cannot understand adulthood or read sheet music.

It’s been said that Tom Thum appears to have not only a symphony orchestra but also a jazz band, techno DJ, 80’s synth pop group and collection of exotic world instruments all residing somewhere in his throat.

Tom’s 15 minute showcase performance at the Sydney Opera House in 2013 quickly became the highest viewed TEDx video of all time with over 44+ million views. Celebrated worldwide for his ability to warp and manipulate his vocal chords, Tom Thum continues to prove that there is no sound he cannot mimic to perfection.

Tom’s talents were honed behind his bedroom door. Listening to artists such as The Fat Boys and Dougie Fresh, Tom began echoing their boom-bap beats and synths with his voice. He performed at open mic nights and Hip-Hop jams in Brisbane, and it wasn’t long before his part-time hobby became a full-time reality.

In 2005, Tom and fellow Australian BeatBox artist Joel Turner joined forces to take out 1st Place in the Team Battle category at the 2005 World BeatBox Battles (Leipzig, Germany).

Since then, his vocal agility has seen him on world tours as part of Fringe sensations ‘Tom Tom Crew’ & ‘Beating The Habit’, with his side project ‘Jamie MacDowell & Tom Thum’, with The Cat Empire throughout Europe.

ABOUT THE ORCHESTRA

Sydney Symphony Orchestra

DAVID ROBERTSON *The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director*
Patron PROFESSOR THE HON. DAME MARIE BASHIR *AD CVO*



PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS

Founded in 1932 by the ABC, the SSO has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Resident at the Sydney Opera House, the SSO also performs regularly at City Recital Hall, tours NSW and internationally, and it is well on its way to becoming the premier orchestra of the Asia Pacific region. The SSO's concerts encompass masterpieces from the classical repertoire, music by some of the finest living composers, and collaborations with guest artists from all genres, reflecting the orchestra's versatility and diverse appeal.

The SSO's award-winning Learning and Engagement program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music – nurturing audiences and engaging the participation of young people. In addition to Family Concerts in Sydney, activities such as Playerlink and regional schools concerts expand the orchestra's reach beyond Sydney to inspire students throughout NSW and Australia. The SSO also promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program, and the SSO Live label captures the orchestra's performances in recordings.

www.sydneyssymphony.com

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Andrew Jeffries^o

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Sami Butler[†]

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Julie Kim*

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[†] = SSO FELLOW

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Learning & Engagement

PHOTO: Keith Saunders



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The Fellowship program receives generous support from the Estate of the late Helen MacDonnell Morgan.

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sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

Clocktower Square,
Argyle Street,
The Rocks NSW 2000
GPO Box 4972,
Sydney NSW 2001
Telephone (02) 8215 4644
Box Office (02) 8215 4600
Facsimile (02) 8215 4646
www.sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com

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Please address all correspondence to the Publications Editor:
Email program.editor@sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com



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SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

Administration (02) 9250 7111
Bennelong Point Box Office (02) 9250 7777
GPO Box 4274 Facsimile (02) 9250 7666
Sydney NSW 2001 Website sydneyoperahouse.com



SYMPHONY
SERVICES
INTERNATIONAL

SYMPHONY SERVICES INTERNATIONAL

Clocktower Square, Shops 6-9
35 Harrington Street, The Rocks 2000
Telephone (02) 8215 4666
Facsimile (02) 8215 4669
www.symphonyminternational.net



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**Head Office: Suite A, Level 1, Building 16,
Fox Studios Australia, Park Road North, Moore Park NSW 2021
PO Box 410, Paddington NSW 2021**

Telephone: +61 2 9921 5353 Fax: +61 2 9449 6053
Email: admin@playbill.com.au Website: www.playbill.com.au

Chairman & Advertising Director Brian Nebenzahl OAM RFD
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